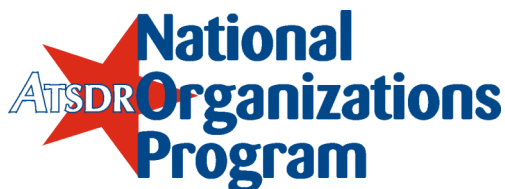




ATSDR/AOEC

Partnering to Make a Difference in Environmental Health



The Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics (AOEC), founded in 1987, is a network of 65 clinics and approximately 300 individual health professionals committed to improving the practice of occupational and environmental medicine through information sharing and collaborative research. As a cooperative agreement partner with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) since 1989, AOEC plays a key role in assisting local health care providers and community members respond effectively to health concerns associated with hazardous waste sites and unplanned releases of hazardous materials.

As part of the cooperative agreement, AOEC and ATSDR work together to conduct site-specific health promotion and medical education activities.

Site-specific health promotion

Site-specific health promotion includes *environmental health interventions* to enhance local communities' access to environmental health services where exposure to hazardous substances associated with waste sites and other unplanned releases are occurring or are likely to occur. Activities, including community needs assessment, environmental health education, clinical evaluations, and clinical specialty referrals, are designed to

- help clarify exposure status and evaluate any associated health concerns,
- improve access to environmental health services, and
- strengthen the local public health system to follow up on environmental health concerns.

Health education

Environmental health education activities provide training to health care providers who work within affected communities and to communities affected by hazardous substances in the environment. This training is implemented in conjunction with local health care providers and with community advice and guidance. One method in environmental health education is distance-based learning. A distance-based learning program was recently held on environmental health education for nurses, nurse faculty, and nursing students in Montana. Four satellite facilities carried the first broadcast reaching participants statewide.

AOEC members also serve as public health experts for site-specific public health problems and education activities.

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